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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Commission decision

**on the financing of Multimedia Actions and the adoption of the work programme for
2021**

ANNEX

Work programme for 2021 for Multimedia Actions (budget line 07 20 04 01)

1. INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the objectives expressed in the budgetary remarks, this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for 2021 as follows:

- (a) for grants (implemented under direct management) – point 2.
- (b) for procurement (implemented under direct management – point 3

Commitment appropriations: 20 212 100

Action		Budget (euro)	Method of implementation (*)	Approximate timetable (**)
1. Partnerships with Union information channels				
- Euronews	<i>Production and broadcast of programmes on Union affairs and Union institutions, as well as a multilingual offer.</i>	16 000 000	Grant for action under a new framework partnership agreement	Q4
2. Media networks: radio network				
-	<i>Production and dissemination of radio content through a network of European partners.</i>	2 200 000	Call for proposal	Q4
3. Multilingual EU affairs using a European media platform		1 762 100	Call for proposal	Q4
4. Evaluations and audits		250 000	Procurement	Q4

Legal basis

Prerogative within the meaning of Article 58(2)(d) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1).

Budget line

07 20 04 01

Objectives pursued

The aim of activities carried out within the Multimedia Actions framework is to fund general information, news and programmes about the Union, directed at the general public. This is intended to increase the visibility of the Union institutions' work, the decisions taken and the stages in the building of Europe. It is also designed to allow citizens to make full use of their right to be informed about and involved in European policies, and to contribute to a better European public sphere. Apart from news reports about the activities of the main Union institutions, Union affairs may include:

- i. economic, political and cultural affairs in all Member States, compared and contrasted in the way in which they deal with the same issues;
- ii. decisions taken at national and regional level which have the potential to shape views on the Union, or affect the daily lives of significant numbers of people in other Member States;
- iii. economic, political and cultural affairs of one Member State, illustrating to those living in others how issues of common concern are addressed.

On this basis, a procedure to sign a new three-year framework partnership agreement (FPA) with Euronews will be launched in order to ensure coverage of Union affairs from a European perspective. Subject to the signature of this new FPA, grants will be signed in Q4 21 to allow for the production and dissemination of TV programmes about EU affairs, accompanied by a multilingual offer. Besides the funding of actions within Euronews, there will also be actions to support the production and dissemination of radio content through a network of European partners, and to support the production, curation and circulation of professional audiovisual news, news media content and programming across the Union through a call on multilingual EU affairs using digital media platforms. The objective is to increase the public's access to news items and programming on EU affairs from European perspectives.

The budget line will also finance media sector analyses and expert assistance, including ex ante, interim or ex post evaluations, audits and controls of current or future activities.

Expected results

The actions will help increase the volume and quality of independent reporting on Union affairs by multiple media outlets (including Euronews), and its impact, by supporting traditional and new media formats (tv, radio, online, etc.) and techniques as well as language diversity. As a consequence, audiences across the EU will have improved access to a wider range of quality information produced from a European perspective, in some cases in their preferred languages. In 2021, this information aspect is of particular relevance in addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis across the Union. The actions might also help increase knowledge about the Union and its culture and values in non-EU countries.

2. GRANTS

The global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme is EUR 19 962 100.

2.1. Partnership with Union broadcasting channels.

Launch of a new framework partnership agreement with the TV broadcaster Euronews

A four-year FPA with the TV broadcaster Euronews came to an end in February 2021. In 2020, a performance audit carried out by an external contractor at the request of the European Commission concluded that Euronews retains a strong European and cross-border perspective in both its EU-funded and non EU-funded coverage, as well as a large number of languages, audience reach and digital profile in many European countries. Euronews can therefore continue to receive grants awarded without a call for proposals (see ‘Types of applicants’, below) within the meaning of Article 195 of the Financial Regulation.

Drawing on the conclusions of the audit and the Commission internal assessments, an invitation for proposal will be submitted to Euronews with a view to signing a new FPA in 2021, with a proposed duration of 3 years.

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

According to the latest data available, around 5.6 million adults in Europe watch the pan-European TV broadcaster Euronews daily. Euronews is deemed to be a ‘particular type of body on account of its technical competence, high degree of specialisation’ carrying out actions with specific characteristics, within the meaning of Article 195(f) of the Financial Regulation. In 2010, the Commission recognised Euronews as a body pursuing an aim of general Union interest in the field of information. In line with Article 180(2), Euronews is considered to be supporting Union policy in this sector. Euronews is thus an eligible body for the purposes of Article 4 of this Financing Decision.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Exclusion and selection criteria

Euronews will have to demonstrate that it is not in an exclusion situation and that it has the financial, technical and operational capacity to implement the actions, as well as stable and sufficient sources of funding to keep up the activity throughout the implementation and/or funding period, and provide proof of its own financial participation.

Award criteria

- Relevance and European added value
- Quality of the proposed methodologies to reach the objectives
- Organisation of the project team
- Quality of the outreach plan and expected impact
- Efficient use of financial resources

In line with the recommendations of the 2020 multimedia performance audit, Euronews will have to supplement its offer with a list of indicators aiming to measure how well the proposed actions and plans are achieved. Indicators will revolve around the following categories: (a) proportion of the EU public addressed through Euronews’ multilingual offer, (b) potential audience, (c) actual audience, (d) digital reach, (e) engagement through social media, and (f) editorial quality and European perspective.

Description of the activities to be funded by the specific grants directly awarded under the FPA

Activity 1. Production and broadcast of programmes and reports on Union affairs and activities and policies of the Union institutions

In 2011, the Commission started signing specific grant agreements to support the production and broadcast of programmes with a special focus on the policies and activities of the Union and its institutions, as well as European issues with a European perspective. That support will continue in 2021. The action will include a network of European correspondents composed of freelancers deployed across the Union (for example in Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Rome, Warsaw, Stockholm, Lisbon, Vienna, Prague, Vilnius, among others). That network helps cover the main topics affecting the European continent.

Activity 2. Improved access to Euronews content through a multilingual offer

Euronews must guarantee that the content is disseminated regularly in at least five official Union languages. The coverage will be complemented by a multilingual offer in other official languages, taking advantage of digital means and technologies to increase audience reach. Languages should be determined taking into account their audience mass, the channel's current distribution per language and whether offering a particular language service is consistent with Euronews' overall strategy.

Editorial independence will be guaranteed by a charter of independence that will be part of the agreement between the European Commission and Euronews.

In all cases, the cofinancing rate will not exceed 95% of the eligible costs.

Implementation

Direct implementation by the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technologies (DG CNECT).

2.2 Media networks: radio network

Type of applicants targeted by the call for proposals

The Multimedia Actions aim to engage the public in the Union policy-making process by providing them with information about European issues from pan-European points of view, going beyond local and national angles, thus underpinning Europe-wide democracy. Actions under this budget line support independent production and dissemination of news and programmes on Union affairs.

Radio receives specific attention, as it is a trusted source of news by the public in many Member States. Since 2007, budget has been allocated to build and grow the production of news items on a network of local, regional and national radio broadcasters across the EU, to produce daily and weekly programmes around EU affairs, on air and on digital platforms.

In 2021, support will be given to an action that can build on quality reporting of this type via radio broadcasters across the Union, while making use of digital technologies and proposing

formats such as podcasting. The aim is to increase outreach across the Union, especially in countries where there is limited provision of information on EU affairs, and taking language diversity into account.

Applicants will be invited to establish networks of radio stations across Europe producing innovative news radio content, in either traditional or digital formats, and distributing it to the widest possible audience. They will be encouraged to use and compare multiple multilingual sources and formats. The action will specifically rely on a central newsdesk coordinating the activity, and will include joint editorial mechanisms and oversights, ensuring independence and accountability of the network members.

The action will cover activities at least until December 2022.

Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

The action will consist of the production and dissemination of radio programmes on EU affairs, on air and on digital platforms by a network of radio stations. It will focus on content production and content distribution.

To engage the public in the Union policy-making process, it is essential to provide information on EU affairs that is characterised by independent, professional and high-quality reporting. The action will aim to increase the production of content that adheres to these principles. The topics and formats of the productions should be tailored to the needs of radio channels, digital radio and other media across Europe.

Expected results of the envisaged Union support include increased coverage of EU affairs in terms of volume and quality, compared to a situation without Union support. The content of such ‘increased coverage’ will depend on the editorial choice of the applicant. Editorial independence will be guaranteed by a charter of independence that will be part of the agreement between the European Commission and the successful applicant.

To reach the widest possible audience, the action aims to increase rebroadcasts of content by radio stations and distribution of the produced content via digital media. To do so, the content production process will need to take into account the needs of member stations, potential partners, listeners and other potential audiences from the outset.

Expected results include increased reporting on EU affairs by a large number of media across the Union, from a pan-European viewpoint and/or by comparing different viewpoints from within Europe, by (re)distributing the produced content via radio and digital channels, reaching a substantial amount of listeners and readers.

The cofinancing rate will not exceed 95% of the eligible costs.

Implementation

Direct implementation by DG CNECT.

Essential exclusion, selection and award criteria

Exclusion and selection criteria

Applicants will have to demonstrate that they are not in an exclusion situation and that they have the financial, technical and operational capacity to implement the action, as well as stable

and sufficient sources of funding to keep up the activity throughout the implementation and/or funding period, and provide proof of their own financial participation. They will have to demonstrate their ability to attract staff members with proven expertise in the media sector and specifically with knowledge of producing engaging radio content in a convergent media landscape. The European Commission expects applicants to bring together media producers from at least four Member States.

Award criteria

Eligible applications/projects will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Relevance and European added value
- Quality of the proposed methodologies to reach the objectives
- Organisation of the project team
- Quality of the outreach plan and expected impact
- Efficient use of financial resources

In line with the recommendations of the 2020 multimedia performance audit, applicants will have to supplement their offer with a list of indicators aiming to measure how well the proposed actions and plans are achieved. Indicators will revolve around the following categories: (a) proportion of EU citizens addressed through the multilingual offer, (b) potential audience, (c) actual audience, (d) digital reach, (e) engagement through social media, and (f) editorial quality and European perspective.

3.3 Multilingual EU affairs using European media platforms

Type of applicants targeted by the call for proposals

The internet has not only vastly changed the volume and variety of available news and media content, but has also profoundly affected the ways in which people access and engage with information. The availability of a wide variety of quality information has the potential to make democratic processes more participatory and inclusive.

Audiences are increasingly turning to online media as their main source of information. At the same time, faced with a multiplication of news sources and formats, often produced with limited resources or under non-professional criteria, people may, paradoxically, engage less with pluralistic and impartial audiovisual online content produced to professional journalistic standards.

The European media sector is struggling to offer accessible, lasting and innovative solutions and joint approaches to their audiences in the competitive news media environment. Collaborative efforts under joint platforms could bring economies of scale and, as a result, increase the coverage, impact and reach of topics affecting people in the Union.

This call will invite applicants to submit projects to increase the curation, production and circulation of professional audiovisual news and news media content, as well as non-fictional programming in European open and digital media platforms. The aim is to help increase the circulation, availability of, and access to quality audiovisual news and news media content and programming in the Union, thereby reinforcing democratic engagement. Applicants are

also expected to consider how to sustain collaboration and professionalism through structured governance and proper editorial arrangements.

Description of the activities to be funded under the call for proposals

The digital shift is increasingly opening up opportunities for developing news content platforms across borders. This call aims to fund the curation, aggregation, production, circulation and dissemination of audio-visual news and news media content, as well as non-fictional programming of multiple formats across European open media platforms. It will cover Union affairs of a local, national and transnational nature from cross-border Union perspectives.

Applicants will need to show how their proposal would help strengthen a European information sphere beyond purely national markets, and ensure that the public receive pluralistic information from diverse sources. Proposals must comply with the highest journalistic standards and offer multilingual content.

The news content and programming used as part of this call will be circulated and disseminated using European digital media platforms, thus helping to promote pluralistic debate in Europe. This delivery platform should be technically reachable across the EU. It should be well curated and promoted both to attract as many viewers as possible but also to reinforce collaboration across the sector and ensure proper availability of content. The workflows and underlying techniques should be transparent and able to accommodate values traditionally linked to quality standards, such as fact-based communication, independence and pluralism, unbiased reporting, fairness, social engagement, algorithmic transparency and accountability, while respecting the diversity of European languages, culture and media products.

News content and programming should be appealing and innovative. Proposals are expected to consider all sorts of content formats and techniques (e.g. automatic translation, Virtual Reality/Augmented reality, databases, media encoding) to ensure the curation, aggregation, circulation and discoverability of content under solid editorial oversight and structured governance.

The territorial focus will be the EU Member States, candidate and potential candidate countries. Expected results include increased coverage of Union affairs and curation and circulation of news items and programmes by professional news media companies in the Union. Applicants will need to assess and present reliable estimates showing how their project would be widely consumed by multiple audiences across the Union.

The grant agreements will include a charter of independence to make sure that applicants are editorially free, so that they can operate without any political interference.

The maximum possible rate of co-financing of the eligible costs is set at 95%.

Implementation

Direct implementation by DG CNECT.

Essential exclusion, selection and award criteria

Exclusion and selection criteria

Candidates will have to demonstrate that they are not in an exclusion situation and that they have the financial, technical and operational capacity to implement the action, as well as stable and sufficient sources of funding to keep up the activity throughout the implementation and/or funding period, and provide proof of their own financial participation. They will have to demonstrate their ability to count on staff members with proven expertise in the media sector and specifically with knowledge of producing and curating engaging news content and programming in a converging media landscape. The European Commission expects applicants to bring together professional news media organisations from multiple Member States, able to cover and be present across as many Union countries and audiences as possible.

Award criteria

Eligible applications/projects will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Relevance and European added value
- Quality of the proposed methodologies to reach the objectives
- Organisation of the project team
- Quality of the outreach plan and expected impact
- Efficient use of financial resources

In line with the recommendations of the 2020 multimedia performance audit, applicants will have to supplement their offer with a list of indicators aiming to measure how well the proposed actions and plans are achieved. Indicators will revolve around the following categories: (a) proportion of EU citizens addressed through the multilingual offer, (b) potential audience, (c) actual audience, (d) digital reach, (e) engagement through social media, and (f) editorial quality and European perspective.

3. PROCUREMENT

The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts in 2021 is EUR 250 000.

Studies and data in the audiovisual landscape: evaluations and audits

General description of the contracts envisaged

Contracts under this grouping of expenditure cover evaluation, studies, meetings and audits related to the different current and future actions funded in the Multimedia Actions line, such as the audits for advising on the methodology used to fix the unit costs guiding the grants signed with Euronews, as well as to perform independent content analysis of the deliverables associated with the actions.

Implementation

Direct implementation by DG CNECT.